

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 04325 01 OF 02 081153Z

46

ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 SAM-01 SP-02 L-02

AF-04 IO-03 INR-10 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 PRS-01 DRC-01

RSC-01 EURE-00 SSO-00 EB-03 /063 W

----- 037903

O R 081037Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 708

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

UDKMDQ/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1373

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DIA WASHDC

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 4325

LIMDIS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LISBON 04325 01 OF 02 081153Z

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION IN
PORTUGAL

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLD

CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: THE SEPTEMBER 30 CHANGE OF REGIME IN PORTUGAL, REMOVING MANY CENTER-RIGHTISTS FROM POWER AND GIVING A BOOST TO THE LEFT, IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN. IT MAY NOT BE AS DRASTIC A SWITCH TO THE LEFT AS MANY PORTUGUESE WHO PROSPERED UNDER SALAZAR AND CAETANO MIGHT THINK. COSTA GOMES HAS THE FLEXIBILITY SPINOLA LACKED AND, DESPITE PROPHECIES OF DOOM, MAY BE ABLE TO TURN PORTUGAL FROM GOVERNMENT BY CONFRONTATION TO GOVERNMENT BY ACCOMMODATION. END SUMMARY

1. THE DEPARTURE OF SPINOLA FROM THE PRESIDENCY TOGETHER WITH THREE OF HIS CLOSE CONFIDANTS FROM THE JUNTA, TWO FROM THE CABINET AND TWO FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE HAS REMOVED FROM POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY A SIZEABLE PERCENTAGE, THOUGH NOT ALL, OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS AT THE TOP OF THE REGIME WHOSE CREDENTIALS AS POLITICAL CENTRISTS OR RIGHT-CENTRISTS WOULD NOT BE QUESTIONED BY ANY OBSERVERS OF THE LOCAL SCENE. THE UNCERTAINTY ENGENDERED BY THESE DEPARTURES FROM POWER HAS BEEN VASTLY ENHANCED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THEM: THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE VIRTUALLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY OF COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED MILITANTS EXERCISING CONTROL OVER ROAD AND RAIL TRAFFIC; REVELATIONS OF COUNTER-COUP PLOTTING, CACHES OF ARMS, AND ASSASSINATION PLANS; BELIEF THAT THE TROOPS, IF ORDERED TO MOVE AGAINST MILITANT LEFTISTS, WOULD REFUSE TO OPEN FIRE; THE FACT THAT THE PRESTIGE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) AND ITS FRONT ORGANIZATION (MDP) HAS INCREASED FOLLOWING THE IMPRESSIVE DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR ABILITY TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LISBON 04325 01 OF 02 081153Z

MOBILIZE MILITANT GROUPS; AND THE FACT THAT THE PRINCIPAL POLITICAL BENEFICIARY OF THESE EVENTS HAS BEEN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S (AFM) POLITICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PCC). OF THE PCC TRIUMVIRATE, MANY OBSERVERS ON THE CENTER AND RIGHT CONSIDER ONE (MAJOR MELO ANTUNES) TO BE A COMMUNIST, ANOTHER (MAJOR VITOR ALVES) A LEFTIST, PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES A COMMUNIST, A FAR-LEFTIST, AND/OR A FANATIC.

2. CLEARLY THERE IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN, BUT THE PICTURE IS NOT NECESSARILY AS BLACK (OR RED) AS SOME WOULD PAINT IT.

3. WE FEEL IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE PORTUGUESE HAVE NO EXPERIENCE OF NORMAL PARTY POLITICAL LIFE. THEY THUS HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN DISCERNING GRADATIONS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, THE CONTACTS AMERICANS HAVE HERE ARE WITH PEOPLE FROM THE POLITICAL CENTER AND RIGHT, TO MANY OF WHOM ANYONE TO THEIR LEFT IS SUSPECT AND POSSIBLY OR PROBABLY A COMMUNIST. IF ANYTHING, THIS ATTITUDE IS EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED AMONG THOSE PORTUGUESE WHO HAVE HAD TIES IN THE U.S. IN THE PAST. IN GENERAL, IT IS PREVALENT AMONG THOSE PORTUGUESE WHO PROSPERED TO A GREATER OR LESSER DEGREE UNDER THE PRE-APRIL 25 REGIME AND WHO THEREFORE HAVE GROUNDS FOR FEELING THAT ANY CHANGE CAN ONLY BE FOR THE WORSE. WE FEEL THAT IT CAN BE MISLEADING FOR A SOUND ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION AND POTENTIALLY HARMFUL TO OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GOPE FOR US TO RELY ON THE OPINIONS OF ALMOST ANY PORTUGUESE CONCERNING THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF ANY OTHER PORTUGUESE. NO PORTUGUESE TODAY SPEAKS OF ANOTHER PORTUGUESE WITHOUT SOME DEGREE OF SELF-SERVING INTEREST IN MIND, WHETHER SPEAKING IN DENIGRATION OR PRAISE. CLEARLY, THE ONLY RELIABLE GUIDES FOR JUDGING THE CURRENT PORTUGUESE LEADERSHIP, ARE, TO A DEGREE, THEIR PAST PERFORMANCE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEIR ACTS.

4. ON THE BASIS OF PAST PERFORMANCE, PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES IS NOT A REASSURING FIGURE. WHEN HE TOOK OFFICE IN JULY, HE APPEARED TO BE A SHY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LISBON 04325 01 OF 02 081153Z

INTELLECTUAL, READING HIS SPEECH NERVOUSLY AND AWKWARDLY BEFORE TV CAMERAS. DURING HIS FIRST TV APPEARANCE FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 28 HE CAME THROUGH AS A PASSIONATE POPULIST, WITH GREATLY INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE. CLEARLY INCENSED OVER THE ATTEMPTED RIGHTIST MANEUVERS OF THE PRECEDING 24 HOURS, HE SPOKE WITHOUT NOTES, BUT WITH INTENSE EMOTION ABOUT THE IDEALS OF THE AFM PROGRAM. FROM THAT AND OTHER PUBLIC APPEARANCES SINCE, GONCALVES HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE A PASSIONATE IDEALIST WITH A HIGHLY-DEVELOPED SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND A STRONG SENSE OF NATIONAL PRIDE, SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED EVEN FOR THE NORMALLY NATIONALISTIC PORTUGUESE. HE VIEWS PORTUGUESE SOCIETY AS GROSSLY UNJUST, HAVING PRODUCED HALF-A-DOZEN PEOPLE WHO ARE AMONG THE RICHEST IN THE WORLD AND HALF-A-DOZEN MILLION

WHO ARE AMONG THE POOREST, AND HE MEANS TO CORRECT
THIS UNJUST IMBALANCE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 04325 02 OF 02 081215Z

46

ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 SAM-01 SP-02 L-02

AF-04 IO-03 INR-10 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 PRS-01 DRC-01

RSC-01 EURE-00 SSO-00 EB-03 /063 W

----- 038136

O R 081037Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 709

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

UDKMDQ/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1374

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DIA WASHDC

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 4325

LIMDIS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LISBON 04325 02 OF 02 081215Z

CONSCIOUS OF THIS, THOSE PORTUGUESE WHO CAN EXPECT TO SEE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING EQUALIZED DOWNWARD ARE UNDERSTANDABLY CONVINCED THAT IS A COMMUNIST. HE DID NOTHING TO CORRECT THAT IMAGE AT HIS SEPTEMBER 30 TV PRESS CONFERENCE DURING WHICH HE MADE TWO SOVIET-LIKE GESTURES: HE CALLED FOR A DAY OF NATIONAL LABOR ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY, AND HE RETURNED THE APPLAUSE OF THE ASSEMBLED JOURNALISTS. HE POSES AS THE CHAMPION OF THE COMMON MAN (AN IMAGE A BIT TRANISHED BY THE FACT THAT IS SAID TO BE A MAN OF SOME (AT LEAST PARTIALLY INHERITED) WEALTH). HE HAS, HOWEVER, SHOWN THE ABILITY TO TAKE UNPOPULAR DECISIONS: FIRST GOVERNMENT INSTITUTED SUBSTANTIAL PRICE INCREASES IN SUCH BASIC COMMODITIES AS BREAD, SUGAR AND RICE, AND HE TOOK THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE ACTIONS BY PERSONALLY ANNOUNCING THEM IN A RADIO/TV ADDRESS. WHETHER HE IS A COMMUNIST OR A PASSIONATE SOCIAL-REFORMING NATIONALIST IS ALMOST REPUTATIONALLY IMMATERIAL FOR U.S. INTERESTS: EITHER CHARACTERIZATION COULD IMPEL HIM TO SEEK TO END U.S. TENURE AT LAJES AND PORTUGUESE MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT IN FACT HAS SUCH AN INTENTION (ALL REPORTS TO THAT EFFECT EMANATE FROM SOURCES HOSTILE TO GONCALVES AND CLOSE TO SPINOLA). INDEED, WHILE STATEMENTS OF INTENT CANNOT BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, NONETHELESS ALL PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON NATO BY GONCALVES, COSTA GOMES, AND SOARES (REPEATED IN PRIVATE TO THE AMBASSADOR) HAVE BEEN REAFFIRMATIONS OF PORTUGAL'S CONTINUED ADHERENCE. CERTAINLY, AVAILABLE OBJECTIVE INDICATORS DICTATE CONSIDERABLE CAUTION AND SKEPTICISM ON THE U.S. PART IN RELATION TO VASCO GONCALVES, BUT DO NOT YET JUSTIFY WRITING HIM OFF AS INCONTESTABLY HOSTILE TO U.S. INTERESTS.

5. NO ONE ACCUSES PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES OF BEING A COMMUNIST. SPINOLA CONSIDERED HIM A QUESTION MARK AND PRO-SPINOLISTAS HAVE ACCUSED HIM OF INDECISIVENESS AND OPPORTUNISM COMBINED WITH PERSONAL AMBITION. THUS WHILE NOT DOUBTING HIS IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION, THESE INDIVIDUALS FEAR THAT TO MAINTAIN HIMSELF AS PRESIDENT HE WILL CONSISTENTLY GIVE IN TO THE LEFTISTS. THE SPINOLIST ASSESSMENT OF HIM MAY, HOWEVER, BE MORE A REFLECTION OF THE FACT THAT HE COULD

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LISBON 04325 02 OF 02 081215Z

NOT BE TRUSTED TO FOLLOW OR SUPPORT SPINOLA ON EVERYTHING WITHOUT QUESTION. MORE WORLDY-WISE THAN SPINOLA, HE DOES NOT SHARE SPINOLA'S VIEW THAT ANYONE TO THE LEFT OF HIM IS A COMMUNIST AND THAT ANYONE WHO EXPRESSES OPINIONS DIFFERING FROM HIS IS NECESSARILY AN ENEMY. THE RECURRENT CRISES DURING SPINOLA'S OCCUPATION OF THE PRESIDENCY WERE IN LARGE PART DUE TO THE FACT THAT SPINOLA'S TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE AS A MILITARY COMMANDER WHO WAS OBEYED WITHOUT QUESTION MADE HIM INTO AN AUTHORITARIAN WHO WAS INCAPABLE OF ACCEPTING A SITUATION IN WHICH HE HAD TO SHARE POWER WITH THE AFM. WHEN THE POWER BALANCE SHIFTED IN HIS FAVOR, HE COULD NOT PASS UP THE TEMPTATION TO TRY TO ELIMINATE THE OTHER POWER ELEMENT. IN CONTRAST, COSTA GOMES RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO ACCORD A MEASURE OF POWER TO THE AFM. HAVING ALWAYS KEPT HIS LINES OPEN TO THE AFM AND, INDEED, HAVING PROBABLY BEEN THE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN TIPPING THE SCALES IN THE AFM FAVOR DURING THE JULY AND SEPTEMBER CRISES, HE IS IN A POSITION TO EXERT INFLUENCE AND, POSSIBLY, LEADERSHIP WITH RESPECT TO AFM. HE HAS UNDOUBTEDLY LOST SOME GROUND IN TERMS OF SUPPORT FROM PRO-SPINOLA, RIGHTIST OFFICERS IN THE MILITARY, BUT THAT COULD CHANGE IF HE IS SEEN TO BE FIRM AND DECISIVE IN KEEPING PORTUGAL ON AN ACCEPTABLY CENTRIST COURSE. HE IS, IN ANY CASE, THE MOST WIDELY RESPECTED MILITARY OFFICER, A DISTINCTION THAT WAS HIS EVEN WHEN SPINOLA WAS AT THE ACME OF HIS POWER. NOT APPARENTLY HAVING THE AUTHORITARIAN INSTINCTS OF SPINOLA, HIS FLEXIBILITY MAY ENABLE HIM TO MAKE THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY IN A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION TO KEEP PORTUGAL ON A REASONABLY EVEN KEEL.

6. THE POWER BALANCE NOW EXISTING IN PORTUGAL IS NOT YET CLEARLY DISCERNIBLE. THE MAIN ELEMENTS NOW ARE COSTA GOMES, THE PCC (PARTICULARLY THE GONCALVES/ANTUNES/ALVES TRIUMVIRATE), AND THE LEFTIST PARTIES, ESPECIALLY THE COMMUNISTS (PCP). POWER INITIATIVE WOULD SEEM TO REST WITH THE PCC, WITH COSTA GOMES ACTING AS A BRAKE ON LEFTIST TENDENCIES, THE PCP ACTING AS A BRAKE AGAINST RIGHTIST MOVES. THE STRENGTH OF EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE, BUT COSTA GOMES

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LISBON 04325 02 OF 02 081215Z

GOMES WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED TO BE A LONELY AND WEAK REED. HE HAS CONSIDERABLE POWER FROM HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE WITHIN THE MILITARY, AND HAS REINFORCED THAT POSITION BY RETAINING THE POST OF CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES. THERE ARE SOME GROUNDS TO BELIEVE THAT THE COSTA GOMES' STYLE OF OPERATING WILL

ALTER THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN THE REGIME; INSTEAD OF THE SPINOLA-STYLE OF ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP AMONG POWER ELEMENTS, IT MAY TURN INTO A SYSTEM OF ACCOMMODATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS. SINCE MUCH OF THE CONTROVERSY IN THE SPINOLA ERA WAS OVER WHO WAS IN CHARGE RATHER THAN WHAT SHOULD BE DONE, WE MAY FIND THAT THE COSTA GOMES REGIME, IF THE ADVERSARY ELEMENT IS IN FACT SUBDUED, WILL BE ONE BETTER ABLE TO GOVERN THAN ITS PREDECESSOR.
SCOTT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, JUNTA, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL LEADERS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON04325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740285-0079
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741064/aaaaccrri.tel
Line Count: 341
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION IN PORTUGAL
TAGS: PINT, PO, (SPINOLA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005